Leasing of Waste land to the Poor

553. SHRIMATI ILA BHATTACHARYA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government propose to lease wasteland to the poor for afforestation as recommended by the National Wastelands Development Board;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof ; and

(c) if the reply to part (a) above be in the negative, what are the reasons therefor ?

The MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z.R. ANSARI): (a) and (b) The National Wastelands Development Board located in the Department of environment, Forests and Wildlife have issued guidelines to the States/ Union Territories recommending that the poor should be associated with tree plantation through leasing of land or through Tree Patta schemes.

(c) Does not arise.

Steps taken to check country's environment problem

554. SHRI MOSTAFA BIN QUASEM : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware that almost one third of country's land area suffers from serious environmental problems according to the Centre for Science and Environment ;

(b) if so, the steps taken by Government to check the deteriorating situation and results achieved so far; and

(c) what further measures Government propose to take in this matter ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z.R. ANSARI) : (a) Yes, Sir. The report brought out by the Centre for Science and Environment has cited the estimate made by the Society for Promotion of Wasteland Development which indicates that almost one-third of the country's land suffers from serious environmental problems.

(b) Several measures have been taken since the first Five Year Plan for arresting land degradation in both agricultural and non-agricultural land under soil and water conservation programmes both in State and Central sectors. Till 1984-85, a total area of about 29·38. million hectares have been treated at a cost of Rs. 1,222 crores. Some of the important schemes for soil conservation and land improvement are the following :—

—Centrally sponsored schemes for soil conservation in 17 catchments of river valley projects.

—Centrally sponsored scheme on Integrated Watershed Management in the catchments of flood prone rivers.

—Pilot programmes for reclamation of ravines and gullies.

—Soil and land use surevys.

—Treatment of saline and alkaline soils.

—Command area development.

Afforestation programmes have also been stepped up over the years with special emphasis on social forestry. Drought Prone Areas Development Programme is being implemented in 615 blocks of 70 districts in 13 States. Desert Development Programmes is being implemented in 21 districts in five States.

(c) A number of these programmes will be continued in the 7th Plan. A major initiative is the setting up of a National Wasteland Development Board for undertaking large scale afforestation programmes for raising fuelwood and fodder plantations in degraded lands. The National Landuse and Wasteland Development Council has been set up for evolving more scientific landuse policies and land management practices.

Pollution of Ganga River

555. SHRI MOSTAFA BIN QUASEM : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that about 132 industries and 64 tanneries are responsible for the pollution of Ganga river ;

(b) whether Government propose to ask these industries to contribute for the Rupees 292 crore project to clean up Ganga as approved by the Central Ganga Authority ; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z.R. ANSARI) : (a) Yes Sir, they contribute part of the total pollution. Domestic waste of the human settlements situated along the banks of the river is the major source of pollution.

(b) Industries are required to clean their wastes at their own cost before discharging into the river. The Rs. 292 crores approved by the Central Ganga Authority are for schemes to control municipal sewage being generated from class-I cities situated on the river banks.

(c) Does not arise.

Government Servants in Pondicherry

556. SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) the strength of (i) gazetted officers (ii) non-gazetted officers and (iii) clerical and group 'D' posts in Pondicherry ;

(b) how many of them are confirmed in their respective posts ;

(c) how many of them who have completed more than 10 years of services and are yet to be confirmed; and

(d) whether Government have reviewed the position of confirmation according to the memorandum issued by the Ministry of Personnel and Training ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF STATES (SHRI P.A. SANGAMA) : (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Crimes in Pondicherry

557. SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of incidents of murder, dacoity in the Union Territory of Pondicherry since 1983;

(b) in how many cases investigations are pending ; and

(c) whether Government have ordered the transfer of pending cases from the local investigation agency to the Central Investigation Agency ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF STATES (SHRI P.A. SANGMA) : (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.